

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LONDON 08173 302207Z

72

ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1531

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

USMISSION OECD PARIS

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

AMCONSUL BELFAST

AMCONSUL EDINBURGH

AMCONSUL LIVERPOOL

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, PINT, UK, EEC

SUBJECT: EC REFERENDUM CAMPAIGN: THE TUC LOOKS AHEAD
AND KEEPS COOL

REF: LONDON 6680

1. UP TO THE FINAL WEEK OF EC REFERENDUM CAMPAIGN, TUC HAS PURSUED A LOW-KEY APPROACH TO THE ISSUE, AS WAS PREDICTED BY GENERAL SECRETARY LEN MURRAY (REFTTEL), SUCCESSFULLY AVOIDING THE BITTERNESS AND ACRIMONY WHICH MARKS THE CURRENT STATE OF AFFAIRS BETWEEN CONMENDING FACTIONS IN THE LABOR PARTY. WE SEE LITTLE PROSPECT THAT THE TUC SITUATION WILL CHANGE AS THE CAMPAIGN WINDS UP.

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2. MUCH OF THE CREDIT FOR THIS RELATIVELY HAPPY SITUATION MUST GO TO THE TGWU LEADER JACK JONES AND TO MURRAY. FROM THE BEGINNING THEY RECOGNIZED THE DIVISIVE NATURE OF THE EC ISSUE AND THAT AN OPEN AND BITTER FIGHT WITH PRIME MINISTER WILSON AND THE PRO-MARKETEERS COULD ONLY DAMAGE TRADE UNION INTERESTS AND THOSE OF THE LABOR GOVERNMENT. BOTH, BUT ESPECIALLY JONES WHO IS MAKING FAR MORE PUBLIC APPEARANCES FOR THE ANTI-EC CAUSE THAN MURRAY HAVE PRESENTED LOW-KEY, REASONED (THOUGH NOT PERSUASIVE) ARGUMENTS OPPOSING CONTINUED MEMBERSHIP. UNFORTUNATELY, MEASURED MESSAGES ARE NOT NEWSWORTHY DURING A CAMPAIGN IN WHICH IRRESPONSIBLE ASSERTION AND INVECTIVE SEEM TO PREVAIL.

3. THE MOST RECENT EXAMPLE OF THE TUC'S VISION WAS MURRAY'S MAY 29 REITERATION THAT THE TUC WILL ABIDE BY REFERENDUM VERDICT AND, SHOULD THE BRITISH PEOPLE VOTE TO STAY IN, PLAY ITS FULL PART IN THE EC'S INSTITUTIONS. LIKE THE NEW STATESMAN WHICH MAY 30 EDITORIALY ENDORSED CONTINUED MEMBERSHIP, THE TUC LEADERS KNOW WHICH WAY THE WIND IS BLOWING AND THEREFORE WISH TO ENSURE THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT COMES OUT OF THE CAMPAIGN AS STRONG AND INFLUENTIAL AS IT ENTERED. THERE IS SOME REASON TO BELIEVE THAT THE TUC'S RESPONSIBLE ROLE IN THE ANTI-MARKET CAMPAIGN WILL BE REMEMBERED, INCREASING THE ORGANIZATION'S STOCK WITH THE WILSON GOVERNMENT ONCE THE ISSUE IS DECIDED.

SPIERS

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